

Strategy Research Project

Minuteman 2020: Maintaining the Operational Army National Guard

by

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United States Army War College
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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

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Abstract

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Due to reduced fiscal resources, the impending conclusion of combat operations in Afghanistan, and the strategic rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, the Department of Defense and the Army will be required to refocus and reorient itself in order to maximize efficiency while maintaining the capability to respond to threats across the full range of operations. An operational Army National Guard will be critical in attaining this efficiency by contributing to the strategic flexibility, depth, and agility required for today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) environment. This paper describes the opportunities associated with an operational Army National Guard and presents a rationale for maintaining its operational role to support the vision promulgated in Joint Force 2020. Furthermore, this paper recommends ways in which to fully integrate the Army National Guard as a partner in total force land power through balanced organizational alignment, proportionate training opportunities, and continued worldwide deployments.

Minuteman 2020: Maintaining the Operational Army National Guard

...we must continue to utilize the...National Guard in an operational capacity as a trained, equipped, ready, and available force.

–The 2011 National Military Strategy of the United States of America¹

Since the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Army National Guard has proven itself to be a capable, flexible, accessible, and indispensable component of the United States Army. To date, 70 major Army National Guard formations deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan, a level of operational tempo not seen since World War Two.² Through twelve years of war, the Army National Guard has provided over 500,000 community-based Soldiers in support of overseas contingency operations, while simultaneously fulfilling a myriad of Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) missions.³ In doing so, the Army National Guard fulfilled the complex requirements of combatant commanders abroad and state governors within the homeland. During this unprecedented period of persistent conflict, the Army National Guard transformed itself from a strategic reserve to a seasoned operational force that is ready, responsive, and relevant in meeting future national security challenges.

The impending conclusion of combat operations in Afghanistan, coupled with the inevitable reduction of fiscal resources and the strategic rebalance to the Asia-Pacific region, requires the Army to adapt and reorient itself. Central to this effort is the Army's ability to maximize efficiency while maintaining the capability to respond to threats across the full range of military operations. An operational Army National Guard is essential to attaining this efficiency by providing the depth and agility needed for an evolving and complex strategic environment. The Army National Guard of today demonstrates this efficiency by providing nearly a third of the Army's personnel and 39

percent of the operational force at only 12.3 percent of the Army budget.⁴ In addition, the Army will greatly increase its force projection capability by maintaining Army National Guard units in the available pool, thus enhancing its generating capacity in support of planned rotational requirements or unforeseen contingencies. The integration of our nation's citizen Soldiers, who remain inexorably linked to the American population, furthers the Total Force Policy and ensures a competitive advantage for the Army to 2020 and beyond.

This paper examines the evolution of the Army National Guard from a strategic reserve of the Cold War to an operational force of today. This paper analyzes the strategic environment as it relates to the impact of decreased combat deployments, limited fiscal resources, reduced force structure, and the rebalance to the Asia-Pacific. This paper also describes the opportunities associated with an operational Army National Guard and presents a rationale for maintaining, and in some cases, expanding its operational role. Furthermore, this paper recommends methods in which to fully integrate and resource this proven component through balanced organizational alignment, proportionate training opportunities, and continued worldwide deployments.

Background and Perspective

Today's Army National Guard is a community-based operational force and the primary combat power reserve of the Army that provides ready units to support global and domestic requirements.⁵ The National Guard, that includes both the Army and Air components, is the only military force within the Department of Defense (DOD) that is shared by both the states and federal government.⁶ The Army National Guard is comprised of eight division headquarters and 128 brigades; this includes 28 Brigade Combat Teams (infantry, heavy, and Stryker), 52 multi-functional brigades (including

combat aviation, surveillance, and sustainment brigades), 48 functional brigades (including military police and chemical), and two Special Forces groups.⁷ These units are manned by more than 356,000 Soldiers residing in fifty states, three territories, and the District of Columbia.

The Army National Guard's tie to the American public is exceptionally unique. Army National Guard units are located in 2,899 communities across the nation (Reference Figure 1. Footprint of the Army National Guard, FY 2012).⁸ This community linkage provides the nation with a military force that lives and works among the population, thus maintaining a strong bridge between the military and the American people. This is evident in a survey of occupations that depicts the breadth of civilian experience found in the Army National Guard, which includes: 5,798 law enforcement and emergency first responders, 5,503 pilots, 5,186 educators, 3,655 medical professionals, 2,804 truck drivers, 2,655 engineers, 2,296 mechanics, 1,794 cooks, 1,402 sales associates, 1,119 agricultural specialists, 778 legal professionals, and over 34,000 students.⁹ In his seminal work, *On War*, Carl Von Clausewitz posits that a paradoxical trinity exists between the government, the people, and the military. All must be linked in common purpose and variable in their relationship to one another.¹⁰ In a period where less than one percent of the total American population serves in uniform, the Army National Guard's community-based presence preserves the tradition of the citizen Soldier and links civilians to the military in a way that cannot be duplicated by the active Army.¹¹



Figure 1. Footprint of the Army National Guard, FY 2012¹²

The Army National Guard has participated in every major conflict fought by the United States. It evolved from a local state militia founded in 1636, to a division-centric force deployed to fight two world wars, a Cold War strategic reserve, and then an operational force of necessity following the attacks of September 11, 2001. In a 2010 study titled, *An Indispensable Force, Investing in America's National Guard and Reserve*, former Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon R. Sullivan (Retired) echoes the contribution of the Army National Guard during this period of persistent conflict, and validates the continued use of the Army National Guard in an operational role.

The National Guard and Reserves remain an indispensable force for defending the American homeland and protecting U.S. security interests around the world. Civilian Guardsmen and Reservists possess specialized skills that augment their military capabilities, rendering them a cost effective and highly talented force well suited for operations that the U.S. military will likely perform over the next 20 years.¹³

While the Army National Guard transformed itself into a capable operational force within the total Army, its future over the long term is uncertain. The consequences of a constrained defense budget, a decrease in combat deployments, and a shifting national strategy will certainly alter the paradigm of the last 12 years. These factors bring into question the role of the Army National Guard and its continued use as an operational force. To understand these issues, a historical overview of the evolution of the Army National Guard from the Vietnam War is required. The general exclusion of the Army National Guard from this conflict was the catalyst for today's operational force.

The Evolution of the Army National Guard: Vietnam to September 10, 2001

In 1965 America's involvement in Vietnam escalated from an advisory presence to a conventional combat role. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara recommended the mobilization of 235,000 members of the National Guard and Reserve, but President Johnson, who was reluctant to alarm or antagonize the public, rejected the proposal.¹⁴ During that period, the Army National Guard possessed a robust combat capability consisting of fifteen divisions (each comprised of combat brigades, division artillery, an engineer brigade, and a division support command) and eleven separate brigades. It was not until April 1968, in response to the Tet offensive, that President Johnson issued Executive Order 11406 that authorized the call-up of 24,500 members of the National Guard and Reserve.¹⁵ Of that number, 12,234 Army National Guardsmen were mobilized, with only 7,000 of them serving in the Republic of Vietnam.¹⁶ The remaining Soldiers remained stateside or were individually assigned to deploying active component units.

Many viewed the Johnson administration's decision not to fully mobilize the reserve component for service in Vietnam as a significant factor in the breakdown of

popular support for the war.¹⁷ In response to the reserve component's limited role in Vietnam, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird introduced the landmark Total Force Concept, which advocated the integration of active-duty and reserve forces, with reserve forces responsible for augmenting their active counterparts.¹⁸ This policy reenergized the DOD's position of maintaining a ready reserve for use in future conflicts, especially following the advent of the all volunteer force and post-Vietnam defense spending cuts. In 1975, General Creighton Abrams, Army Chief of Staff, adopted a round-out strategy through which reserve component brigades were used to "round-out" active brigades and divisions. These reserve brigades had equal priority to the active units for equipment. This initiative was later known as the Abram's Doctrine and summarized in General Abram's own words, "they're not taking us to war again without the Reserves!"¹⁹

Between the Vietnam War and the late 1980s, the role of the Army National Guard grew through further implementation of the Total Force Concept. In 1982, Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger introduced the "First to Fight" principle of resource allocation. This principle reinforced the reliance on the reserve component in future conflicts by stating, "Units that fight first shall be equipped first, regardless of component."²⁰ However, the Army National Guard's role remained one of a strategic reserve, focused on mobilizing, training, and deploying to defeat a Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Therefore, most Guardsmen thought a large-scale mobilization unlikely. All of that changed with Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990.

The invasion of Kuwait resulted in the first large-scale deployment of the United States military since the end of the Vietnam War. The United States Army, having

undergone the traumatic period of rebuilding in the 1970s and the capital reinvestment of the 1980s, emerged as a capable force with modernized equipment and well-trained combat formations. The strategy to defeat the Iraqi army required 500,000 troops and necessitated the call-up of the reserve component. The Army National Guard activated 398 units, affecting 51 out of the 54 states and territories. In the first real test of the Total Force Concept, select Army National Guard units mobilized a little more than two weeks after Operation Desert Shield began.²¹ In all, the Army National Guard mobilized 62,411 personnel into active federal service, with 37,848 of them serving in Southwest Asia.²²

Of significance was the mobilization of five combat brigades. Two field artillery brigades, the 142nd Brigade from Arkansas and the 196th Brigade from Tennessee, deployed as general support artillery and fought alongside a British armored division and French light armored division respectively²³. Their performance during the ground war further validated the Total Force Concept in the view of the United States Army.²⁴ However, the three round-out brigades, the 48th Brigade from Georgia, the 256th Brigade from Louisiana, and the 155th Brigade from Mississippi, did not deploy into the combat theater in what a General Accounting Office (GAO) investigation characterized as a failure to achieve adequate readiness standards within the required time-frame for deployment.²⁵ While there remains controversy surrounding the mobilization and validation processes of the round-out brigades in support of Operation Desert Storm, the Army National Guard at large was recognized for its outstanding contribution to the war. General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said on December 3, 1990, "The success of the Guard's participation in Desert Shield cannot be

overemphasized.”²⁶ Furthermore, General Fredrick Franks, who served as the 7th U.S. Corps commander, commented to National Guard senior commanders on April 3, 1992, “You [the Army National Guard] saved the battle.”²⁷

On February 28, 1991, the Gulf War ended. On December 25, 1991, the Russian Federation flag replaced the flag of the Soviet Union, thus ending the Cold War. These two seminal events led to a series of radical manpower and force structure reductions in the United States Army. As part of his senate confirmation hearing for Army Chief of Staff in 1991, General Gordon R. Sullivan put forth a five-year manpower reduction plan that would greatly alter the composition of the total force. The cuts reflected an overall decrease in troops by 27%, from 1.48 million Soldiers in 1990 to 1.08 million Soldiers in 1995. Within these cuts, the Army National Guard would reduce from 437,000 in 1990 to 321,000 in 1995.²⁸ The 1992 National Military Strategy of the United States reflected the impact of these proposed cuts in General Colin Powell’s cover letter.

Future threats to US interests are inherent in the uncertainty and instability of a rapidly changing world. We can meet the challenges of the foreseeable future with a much smaller force than we have had in recent years. Our force of the 1990s is... a carefully tailored combination of our active and reserve components.²⁹

The period between 1992 and 1997 was one of opportunity, tension, and evolution for the Army National Guard. In 1993, a series of policy decisions born out of the 1993 Off-site and 1993 Bottom-Up Review postured the Army National Guard to assume a more combat focused role. The 1993 Off-site agreement clearly delineated the future missions of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve. The agreement allocated most combat force structure (except one Army Reserve infantry battalion and two AH-64 attack battalions) to the Army National Guard, and assigned the Army Reserve the primary roles of combat support and combat service support.³⁰

Following the 1993 Off-site agreements, the 1993 DOD Bottom-Up Review (BUR) further expanded the combat role of the Army National Guard. The 1993 BUR directed that the United States military be able to fight two near-simultaneous, major regional conflicts. The defense spending and personnel reductions initiated in 1992 required a heavier reliance on the reserve component to fulfill this strategy. Therefore, the 1993 BUR directed the Army National Guard to transition to a combat force of about 37 brigades, including 15 enhanced readiness brigades, to provide strategic insurance and to support civil authorities.³¹ The 1993 BUR further emphasized the need for the Army National Guard enhanced brigades to fulfill the new strategy.

The 15 enhanced readiness Army National Guard brigades will be organized and resourced so that they can be mobilized, trained, and deployed more quickly to the fast-evolving regional conflicts that we expect in the future. These brigades will be able to reinforce active combat units in a crisis. The goal is to have these brigades ready to begin deployment in 90 days.³²

The 1997 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) embraced the enhanced separate brigade concept as recommended by the 1993 BUR.³³ Acceptance of the enhanced brigades within the total force provided the Army National Guard with its first opportunity for operational level resourcing and training. However, the eight Army National Guard divisions remained a strategic reserve force without an assigned wartime mission, except for easing Army personnel tempo in peacetime operations, providing rotational forces for extended contingencies, responding to domestic emergencies, and hedging against the emergence of a more threatening international environment.³⁴ The 1997 QDR also identified the need for additional manpower reductions of 15,000 personnel from the active Army, 7,000 from the Army Reserve, and a staggering 38,000 personnel from the Army National Guard. In an effort to prevent the disproportionate cuts from

taking place, the Department of the Army conducted the 1997 Off-site and reached an agreement that stabilized manning levels amongst all components through proportionate reductions (See Table 1. Army Personnel End Strength, FY 90 to 1997 Off-site).

Table 1. Army Personnel End Strength FY 90 to 1997 Off-site³⁵

COMPO	FY 90	1993 Off-site	1997 QDR	1997 Off-site
Active Component	750,600	495,000	480,000	480,000
USAR	299,100	208,000	201,000	205,000
ARNG	437,000	367,000	329,000	350,000
TOTAL	1,486,700	1,070,000	1,010,000	1,035,000

At the end of the 20th Century, Army National Guard units deployed around the globe in an ever-increasing operational capacity. Missions ranged from support of peace and stabilization efforts in Bosnia and Kosovo, to deterrence efforts in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. For the first time since the Korean War, Army National Guard infantry companies deployed overseas in 1999 to secure Patriot missile sites as part of Operation Southern Watch. In March, 2000, the 49th Armored Division Headquarters (Texas Army National Guard) deployed to Bosnia in support of Operation Joint Guard, and became the first Army National Guard division since World War II to command active component units.³⁶ This period of operational employment proved that Army National Guard units could mobilize and deploy within a predictable rotational framework. These deployments built a foundation of experience before the events of September 11, 2001 thrust the Army National Guard into war.

Transformation to an Operational Force: September 11, 2001 to Today

Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 and the subsequent wars in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the United States entered into what Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld termed, The Long War. Before the end of 2001, Army National Guard units entered into the fight as more than 10,000 Guardsmen were mobilized for Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. Simultaneously, Army National Guard units conducted homeland security missions in support of Operation Noble Eagle. The March 2003 invasion of Iraq escalated the Army National Guard's presence throughout the world in support of operational requirements. In 2005, the Army National Guard attained its highest level of mobilizations with 105,000 Soldiers serving on Title 10 active duty (See Figure 2. Army National Guard Mobilizations since 9/11).³⁷ In the summer of 2005, the Army National Guard provided seven of 15 combat brigades and 41% of all Army personnel in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.³⁸

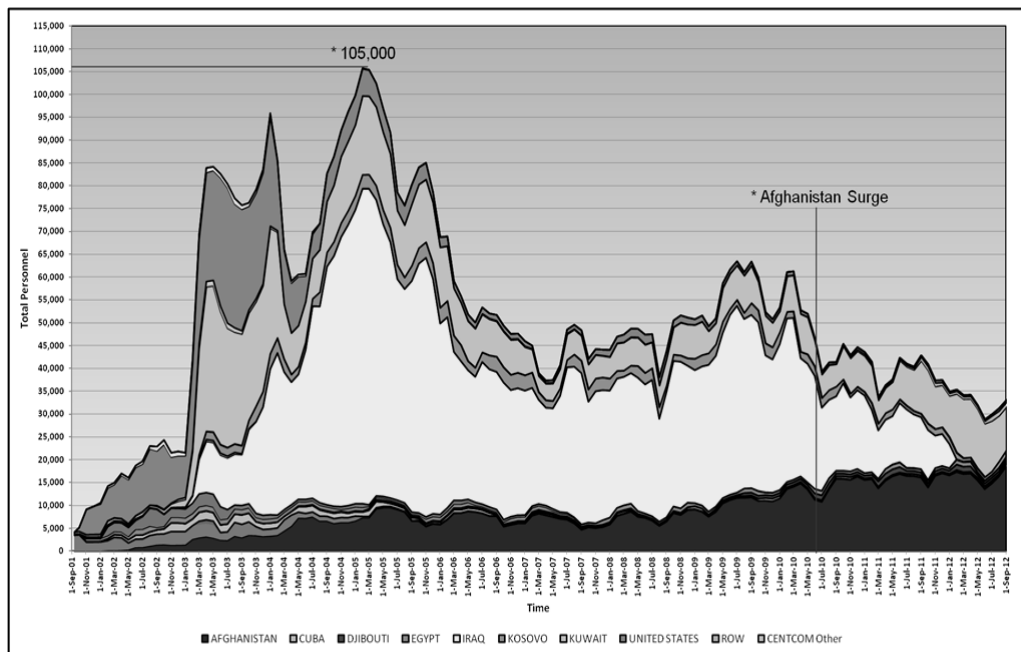


Figure 2. Army National Guard Mobilizations since 9/11³⁹

The Army National Guard continued to fulfill its domestic requirements as well. On August 29, 2005, at the height of the Army National Guard's involvement in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Hurricane Katrina struck the Mississippi and Louisiana gulf coast. In spite of 80,000 Soldiers deployed overseas, to include the 256th Heavy Brigade Combat Team from Louisiana, the National Guard responded to Hurricane Katrina with over 50,000 Soldiers and Airmen from 23 states.⁴⁰ This demonstrated that the Army National Guard could fulfill its federal wartime mission and major domestic disaster responsibilities simultaneously. Through its contribution to the war on terrorism, the Army National Guard fully evolved into an operational reserve. As expeditionary requirements grew, the Army and the DOD developed several initiatives and policies that further organized, resourced, and established the Army National Guard as a partner in expeditionary land-power.

The evolution of the Brigade Combat Team (BCT) through modular reorganization had a significant effect on the Army National Guard. Between 2004 and 2008, the Army transformed its legacy division-based structure to a more adaptable and flexible brigade-centric expeditionary force. The intent of modularity was to create units that were more relevant to the combatant commanders by providing more lethal and self-contained forces organized with capabilities for the full range of missions.⁴¹ This modular concept grew active component BCTs from 33 in 2003, to 45 in 2010. Subsequently, Army National Guard brigades transformed into 28 BCTs, including 20 infantry BCTs (IBCT), representing 71 percent of the Army's total IBCTs, seven mechanized or heavy BCTs (HBCT), representing 25 percent of the Army's heavy force, and one Stryker BCT (SBCT), representing 16 percent of the Army's Stryker capability.⁴²

The effects of transformation were profound in that they ensured compatibility between the active and reserve force, and standardized organizational design in respect to equipping and manpower requirements.

In an effort to synchronize and prepare units for overseas deployment, the Army implemented the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) process in 2006. ARFORGEN is the structured progression of unit readiness over time, providing a constant flow of trained, ready, and cohesive units.⁴³ The ARFORGEN model is an Army mechanism that allocates resources and identifies benchmarks for units at different periods of availability. The specific model developed for the Army National Guard is built over a five-year period, with increased levels of personnel, training, and equipping readiness achieved each year through a series of aim-points linked to unit status reporting (USR) ratings.

The Reset year is focused on individual training and essential personnel and logistics activities that set the conditions for units to enter into the Train/Ready phases. Train/Ready (T/R) years one through three provides a progressive framework that increases both unit and staff proficiency from the squad through brigade level. The Available year represents the window of time when a reserve component unit is available for mobilization and subsequent validation through a capstone training event at a mobilization station or combat training center. Following mobilization, the Army National Guard unit reenters the reset phase, thus starting the cycle over again.

The ARFORGEN process is an effective tool for the Army National Guard. It provides a predictable model from which to plan and maintain units to meet critical force requirements in support of combatant commanders. ARFORGEN is also critical in that it

prevents “cold starts.” In today’s construct, units are sourced for potential mobilization two years out and formally alerted not less than one year from mobilization.

Recognizing that the DOD would have to continue to rely on the reserve component in order to meet its war fighting requirements, Secretary Robert Gates issued DOD Directive 1200.17, *Managing the Reserve Components as an Operational Force*, on October 29, 2008. DOD Directive 1200.17 was revolutionary in that it was the first official policy statement that articulated the need for the Army National Guard to serve as an operational force. The policy further states that the reserve component provide operational capabilities and strategic depth to meet U.S. defense requirements across the full spectrum of conflict. The policy recognized active and reserve component integration as a total force and acknowledged the reserve component’s connection to and commitment of the American People.⁴⁴ DOD Directive 1200.17 further highlights:

- Homeland Defense and Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) are total force missions.
- Reserve component resourcing plans shall ensure visibility to track resources from formulation, appropriation, and allocation through execution.
- Family and employer support outreach programs are sufficient to sustain the all-volunteer force.
- Active component and reserve component organizations be integrated to the greatest extent practicable.
- Service secretaries ensure that the reserve components participate across the full spectrum of missions at home and abroad in providing operational capabilities according to the national defense strategy.⁴⁵

The Army National Guard's human investment in both Iraq and Afghanistan has been profound. As of January 4, 2013, the Army National Guard suffered 704 deaths (to include 523 killed in action) and over 17,000 injuries (including 5,748 wounded in action).⁴⁶ Since 9/11, the Army National Guard has deployed 210,000 Soldiers to Iraq, 80,000 Soldiers to Kuwait, and over 80,000 Soldiers to Afghanistan.⁴⁷ Through twelve years of war, the Army National Guard has proved to be a valued and dependable member of the total force. However, while the war in Iraq has ended and the Afghanistan campaign is near conclusion, new threats to the Army National Guard's status as an operational reserve are looming on the horizon.

An Uncertain Environment: Adapting to New Realities

Today, the Army National Guard faces an uncertain environment both at home and abroad. This environment is defined by constrained resources, institutional restructuring, and changing national security requirements. The realities of domestic and international policy are forcing the DOD and the Army to reorient and reorganize at a level not seen since the end of the Cold War. This period of cost saving efficiency, force structure reductions, and strategic rebalancing will further define the operational role of the Army National Guard and determine its place within the total force of the future.

One of the greatest factors related to this change is the impact of the economic crisis and the resulting Budget Control Act of 2011. Near the end of 2008, an economic crisis of a magnitude not seen since the great depression struck the nation. This crisis necessitated a dramatic fiscal shift to prevent further economic damage brought on by years of deficit spending and increasing national debt. In an effort to reduce future deficits and curtail the increase of the national debt, Congress passed the Budget

Control Act of 2011. The 2011 Budget Control Act eliminated approximately 900 billion dollars in spending over the next ten years, with 463 billion dollars of that amount taken from the DOD. Furthermore, a budget super committee identified a total of 2.1 trillion dollars in cuts mandated in the 2011 Budget Control Act. As a condition, if the super committee failed to reach a bi-partisan agreement by 31 December 2012, an additional 1.2 trillion dollars in sequestration cuts would go into effect, with an additional 487 billion dollars levied against the Department of Defense. On 1 January 2013, Congress passed a two month extension to the spending cut proposals within the Budget Control Act; therefore, maintaining the possibility of sequestration should an enduring agreement not be reached. On July 25, 2012 during testimony at a joint House Armed Services and Veterans Committee meeting, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta addressed sequestration by saying, "I hope the hell it doesn't happen...it would be a disaster in terms of the Defense Department...as far as our budget is concerned, as far as our ability to respond to the threats that are out there, it has a big impact."⁴⁸

In response to the budget reductions imposed by the 2011 Budget Control Act, the Army initiated a builddown to cut personnel and operating costs through the elimination of force structure. Over the next five years, the active component will reduce from its wartime high of 570,000 to 490,000 Soldiers, representing a 14% decrease in uniformed personnel. In addition to the manpower reductions, the Army will also reduce its BCTs from 45 to 37, with an additional force structure cut to 32 BCTs possible. While the cuts are significant, the Army maintains they are necessary in order to retain a high level of readiness in a budget-constrained environment. The Army National Guard will reduce from its wartime high authorization of 358,200 to 350,200 Soldiers. However, it

will lose no significant force structure and will retain its 28 BCT composition. The lack of significant cuts is an indicator that the DOD and the Department of the Army are mitigating risk by maintaining the Army National Guard as an operational reserve in the total force, at least in the near term. Furthermore, the January 2012, *Defense and Budget Priorities and Choices*, published by the DOD, discusses the implications of a reduced active component and the future of an operational Army National Guard.

A smaller active force requires a capable and ready reserve component. Consequently, we are making only marginal reductions in the Army Reserve and Army National Guard. Furthermore, we will leverage the operational experience and institute a progressive readiness model in the National Guard and Reserves in order to sustain increased readiness prior to mobilization.⁴⁹

In the midst of the Army's restructuring and build-down, The DOD published a landmark strategy document titled, *Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for a 21st Century Defense*, which President Obama signed on January 3, 2012. This document reorients the DOD towards a new strategic vision and provides a blueprint for the Joint Force of 2020.⁵⁰ The purpose of this publication is to transition the defense establishment from an emphasis on today's wars to preparing for future challenges, to promulgate the efforts of rebalance and reform, and to support the national imperative of deficit reduction through decreased defense spending.⁵¹ The rebalance to the Asia-Pacific is the most significant concept of this new strategy. The document states that while the United States military will continue to contribute to security globally, the nation will rebalance and focus on its alliances that provide a vital foundation for Asia-Pacific security.⁵²

The full impact of this document on the Army is evolving. While the effects of land-power in the War on Terrorism are decisive, the Asia-Pacific rebalance puts into

question the role of the Army in a region dominated by the air and sea. This strategic rebalance requires the Army to reorient and refocus its capabilities in the Pacific while simultaneously conducting combat operations in the Central Command area of responsibility. In an effort to address these challenges, the Army instituted a regionally aligned forces concept to allocate units on a rotational basis to respective combatant commanders in support of security assistance and cooperation endeavors. This rebalance and strategic shift will affect the Army National Guard and its continued use as an operational force. The Joint Force 2020 document addresses this issue.

The Department [of Defense] will need to examine the mix of active component and reserve component elements best suited to the strategy. Over the past decade, the National Guard and Reserves have consistently demonstrated their readiness and ability to make sustained contributions to national security. The challenges facing the United States today and in the future will require that we continue to employ National Guard and Reserve forces.⁵³

Furthermore, on September 4, 2012, Secretary of the Army John M. McHugh signed Army Directive 2012-08, *Army Total Force Policy*. This document reinforces the Total Force Concept by directing the Army to organize, man, train, and equip both the active and reserve component as an integrated operational force to provide predictable, recurring, and sustainable capabilities.⁵⁴ Army Directive 2012-08 is significant in that it clearly articulates the fundamental role of the Army National Guard as an operational force, either operating independently or integrated with active component counterparts. Army Directive 2012-08 establishes clear ways and means for which to achieve the stated objective of providing operating forces to support the National Military Strategy and Army commitments worldwide.⁵⁵ Army Directive 2012-08 recognizes the critical need of the Army National Guard at a time when resources are dwindling and future roles and missions are uncertain.

Opportunities: Maintaining the Operational Army National Guard

The Army's posture statement of 2011 reflects the opportunities available to the Army National Guard in today's strategic environment by stating, "We cannot relegate the Army National Guard and Army Reserve back to a strategic reserve. The security of the nation can ill afford a reserve force that is under-manned, under-equipped or at lower levels of training and readiness."⁵⁶ The current economic crisis refocused the DOD on the need to become increasingly efficient while maintaining the capability to respond to the global threats and challenges present in today's volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. The Army National Guard is an organization that represents such cost savings and relative efficiency.

As the Army continues its builddown in force structure and assigned personnel, the Army National Guard will have the opportunity to efficiently replace lost capability and capacity. The Army National Guard is unique in that it simultaneously fulfills requirements both at home and abroad. It represents a great value for America in that it maintains full time availability at a part time cost.⁵⁷ One Army National Guard Soldier's pay and allowances costs the American taxpayer approximately 31% of an active component Soldier.⁵⁸ Additionally, the Reserve Forces Policy Board released a study on December 12, 2012 titled, *Eliminating Major Gaps in DoD Data on the Fully-Burdened and Life-Cycle Cost of Military Personnel*. The findings of that study depict the total per-capita fiscal year 2013 cost for an active component Soldier at \$384,622, compared to the cost of a reserve component Soldier at \$123,351.⁵⁹ The 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review further acknowledges the cost savings and efficiencies inherent in reserve component formations as it relates to increasing total force capacity.

Using the National Guard and Reserves in this way will lower overall personnel and operating costs, better ensure the right mix and availability of equipment, provide more efficient and effective use of defense assets, and contribute to the sustainability of the active and reserve components.⁶⁰

Security cooperation support to geographic combatant commanders is another opportunity for the Army National Guard. Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication 1-02 defines security cooperation as:

All DOD interactions with foreign defense establishments to build defense relationships that promote specific U.S. security interests, develop allied and friendly military capabilities for self-defense and multinational operations, and provide U.S. forces with peacetime and contingency access to a host nation.⁶¹

Security cooperation is a centerpiece of Joint Force 2020 and is an essential element of strategic engagement. As the Army reorients from the war in Afghanistan to emerging opportunities throughout the world, the Army National Guard must provide its expertise in this area to combatant commanders by leveraging established international relationships against U.S. strategic military objectives.

The National Guard has exceptional access to nations around the globe through its State Partnership Program. The State Partnership Program provides the DOD and the Army with a military to military engagement force that is currently partnered with 66 nations, with the most recent addition being the Oregon National Guard and Vietnam partnership established on November 29, 2012. The State Partnership Program promotes contingency access, interoperability, and improves the capacity of indigenous self defense forces within every geographic combatant command (Reference Figure 3. Current National Guard State Partnerships).⁶² The National Guard's State Partnership Program offers America another great value as those who conduct these exercises are part time Soldiers and Airmen. In 2011, the State Partnership Program accounted for 44

percent of all military to military engagements in Europe, 46 percent in Africa, and 38 percent in South America.⁶³



Figure 3. Current National Guard State Partnerships⁶⁴

Overseas Deployment Training offers the Army National Guard another avenue to support security cooperation. Overseas Deployment Training provides Army National Guard units the opportunity to deploy overseas and conduct exercises with partnered military forces. As combat deployments continue to decrease, Overseas Deployment Training allows the Army National Guard to remain engaged globally, while simultaneously furthering strategic interests through the advancement of combatant command and Army Service Component Command objectives. In 2011, the Army National Guard sourced more than 50% of security cooperation missions requested by Army Service Component Commands through unit Overseas Deployment Training

exercises. In support of those requirements, the Army National Guard deployed 18,575 Soldiers to support 69 exercises in 104 countries.⁶⁵

Recommendations: Maximizing an Operational Army National Guard in the Total Force

Clausewitz wrote, “A reserve has two purposes. One is to prolong and renew the action; the second, to counter unforeseen threats.”⁶⁶ This definition directly applies to maintaining an operational reserve, more specifically, the operational force that is the Army National Guard. Unforeseen threats and challenges to United States security describe today’s VUCA environment. Iran’s nuclear weapons development program, North Korea’s continued pursuit of a ballistic missile capability, China’s emerging military capacity, and destabilization in Syria, all point to the need for the United States to maintain a capable reserve component. Threats to our homeland in the form of terrorist attack or natural disaster require a manned, equipped, and trained Army National Guard to respond quickly and effectively. In comments to senior National Guard leaders on November 8, 2011, Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta affirmed, “A decade at war has honed the Guard into an effective, lethal fighting force...and it would be a tremendous mistake, in my view, to put that capability back on the shelf.”⁶⁷ Therefore, what can be done to ensure that the operational Army National Guard of today is maintained and ready for the future?

Balanced Organizational Alignment

Central to the Army National Guard’s future as an operational force is balanced organizational alignment that ensures compatibility between the Army National Guard and the active component. As the Army looks to decrease the number of its brigades, it is also undergoing a reorganization to add a third maneuver battalion to the BCT design. Therefore, Army National Guard BCTs are converting in the same manner.

Regardless of the type of formation, Army National Guard force structure should replicate the active component. This alignment will not only ensure like capabilities throughout both components, it will also provide flexibility in building active and reserve expeditionary capabilities in support of unforeseen contingency operations.

The active component can also resource the new third maneuver battalion force structure concept by partnering active Army and Army National Guard BCTs. This idea reflects the spirit of DOD Directive 1200.17 by integrating to the greatest extent practicable, active and reserve formations.⁶⁸ For instance, an Army BCT is sourced to deploy, and through an established AC/RC BCT alignment, that Army BCT deploys with an Army National Guard unit as its third maneuver battalion. This concept will save money, enhance AC/RC cooperation, and maintain a high level of readiness without additional resources or further force structure changes.⁶⁹ This concept is particularly cogent as it could maintain Army BCTs at 37 and prevent additional reductions as a result of internal active component restructuring.

Proportionate Training Opportunities

In order to remain an operational force and prevent a significant readiness decline, Army National Guard units should be afforded the same training opportunities as the active component. Through continued utilization of the ARFORGEN model, Army National Guard brigades should be progressed through a capstone training event during their available year. Crucial to this initiative is the continued inclusion of Army National Guard formations in National Training Center (NTC), Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC), and Joint Multi-National Readiness Center (JMRC) rotations.

Collective training proficiency should not be allowed to atrophy. In order to retain the greatest level of capability, Army National Guard units should be progressed

through a readiness model that is resourced no lower than platoon level training proficiency. Anything less than platoon level proficiency risks reversing the exceptional gains Army National Guard units have made in the area of training and operational readiness. Not only is this level of training critical to retaining a total force capability for combatant commanders, it is essential in providing responsive and capable support to civil authorities in the execution of homeland defense and homeland security missions.

Continued Worldwide Deployments

An operational Army National Guard deployed and engaged across the world provides the DOD and the active Army exceptional strategic depth. In addition, maintaining the Army National Guard as an operational force increases the active Army's agility and flexibility to respond to unforeseen contingencies prevalent in today's VUCA world. Through the State Partnership Program or Overseas Deployment Training experiences, the Army National Guard provides combatant commanders with unique military cooperation and assistance capabilities that greatly enhance regional security, especially in the emerging Asia-Pacific area of responsibility. Furthermore, as the Army develops the regionally aligned forces concept, Army National Guard units should be included in the plan and programmed for participation in their respective AFORGEN available years. On October 22, 2012, General David Rodriguez, United States Army Forces Command Commander, echoed this sentiment by saying:

The Guard and Reserve have a long history of successful engagements abroad. Those relationships were built on state partnerships and other exercises and training, and are as strong as they can be in the Guard and Reserve. We'll continue to take advantage of those relationships to further influence stability around the world.⁷⁰

The Army National Guard should also maintain its foundational deployment responsibilities in support of operations in Kosovo, the Horn of Africa, and the Sinai

Peninsula. These deployments serve as a way of keeping Army National Guard units “in the fight,” and therefore a contributing partner in unified land operations. Furthermore, the Army National Guard is uniquely suited to conduct stability operations, which are a centerpiece of these foundational deployments. Over time, the Army National Guard has developed wide area security proficiency through participation in both combat and defense support to civil authorities response. By maintaining a wide area security focus in support of unified land operations, the Army National Guard can provide active Army formations the time and space required to reestablish and sustain combined arms maneuver proficiency that has degraded following 10 years of counter-insurgency warfare.

Conclusion

Today’s Army National Guard is a well-trained, battle-hardened, and capable force. Investing in an operational Army National Guard is the best choice for the nation in order to capitalize on the hard-earned skills of the citizen Soldier and maximize the efficiencies inherent in the reserve component. By maintaining an operational Army National Guard, the Army will be better prepared to meet the diverse missions that are sure to arise in the VUCA environment of the future. Through balanced organizational alignment, proportionate training opportunities, and continued worldwide deployments, the Army National Guard will be postured to contribute to the strategic objectives of the United States to 2020 and beyond.

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